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THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
13 FEB 1995
PURCHASED

CBC NEWSLETTER

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume 41 January /February 1995 Number 1

Spring Meeting To Explore New Area

The 1995 spring meeting of the Carolina Bird Club will take place April 28-30 in **Greenwood, SC**. This is a new area for the CBC and most members in the club. It will be a time of discovery as an area of the state that has received little birding attention by large groups is covered by dozens of field trips during the three-day meeting.

Late April is a great time for migrants through the Piedmont of South Carolina. Flycatchers, swallows, thrushes, warblers and finches are often in abundance as they move through or settle in for the breeding season. The three nightjars will have returned, and their mixed nocturnal songs will be the focus of a late evening field trip. The possibility exists to locate some uncommon breeders such as Grasshopper Sparrow or Barn Owl. "Winter" birds sometimes linger late at nearby Lake Greenwood State Park, and the Ninety-Six National Historic Site has vast potential for something exciting.

Birders who know the area will lead

field trips in Greenwood, Abbeville and McCormick Counties, and Georgia is not far away for folks who wish to do some spring migration birding in that state. With a good variety of habitats, this promises to be an interesting meeting location. Registration for the field trips will be available through the next newsletter.

Accommodations have been arranged through the Comfort Inn on the Highway 72 Bypass in Greenwood. The nightly rate for 1-4 persons is $45.00 plus 7% tax. A continental breakfast and use of fitness room is included. Use the reservation form provided in this newsletter or call (803) 223-2838. The deadline for receiving this rate is **March 31**. Notice of cancellation is required by 6:00 pm on the date of arrival in order to receive refund of deposit or avoid charge for room. Other motels in Greenwood include: Days Inn (803) 223-3979, Econo Lodge (803) 229-5329, Holiday Inn (803) 223-4231, Ideal Motel (803) 229-6633, Inn on the Square (803) 223-4488, Village Lodge (Super 8) (803) 223-1818. Lake Greenwood State Park also has many campsites from which to choose.

North Carolina Breaks Ground for New Museum

The "Field Trip to the Future" which launched the new $30.9 million N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences building included a special visitor from the past. H. H. Brimley, nineteenth century Engish naturalist and the Museum's first director (portrayed by actor, Ira David Wood III), recounted his early days of collecting alligators and mounting whale skeletons at the Museum in an exchange with master of ceremonies, Bill Leslie of WRAL-TV.

More than 300 people braved a chilly afternoon on December 8, 1994, to witness the groundbreaking by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., Dept. of Environment, Health and Natural Resources Secretary Jonathan Howes, and legislative and local leaders. A reception hosted by Friends of the Museum followed the ceremonies.

Scheduled to open in fall 1998, the seven-level, 190,000 square-foot building will better accomodate the crowds of visitors, students and researchers who use the Museum. Exhibits will focus on the natural history of the entire state. Museum Director Betsy Bennet said, "The centerpiece exhibit, 'North Carolina: From the Mountains to the Sea,' will suggest the state's topography and diverse plant and animal life, using specimen animals and plants in a two-story simulation of the state's three land regions--mountains, piedmont, and coastal plain. It will bring home the point that North Carolina is blessed with an incredibly diverse, interconnected natural heritage."

The museum staff will nearly triple from 35 to about 100.

Backyard Birding

with Frances J. Nelson

January 9, 1995--Bird activity in our yard in November continued to be rather slow. We had a few juncoes, goldfinches, chickadees, titmice, Carolina Wrens, Mourning Doves, cardinals, and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (the same one we had last year?) spent the day on a Bradford pear on November 12.

December started off slowly, but on the tenth the birds arrived. A flock of robins and Red-winged Blackbirds landed in the front yard and stayed several hours. On the eleventh a phoebe spent most of the day on or around our front deck. A group of Cedar Waxwings flew over on the sixteenth but didn't stop for the yaupon berries. They usually strip the yaupon Thanksgiving weekend, but they were later this year and ignored our berries. Robins have been fighting over the berries and have eaten some of them, but we still have berries. I was a little concerned that something was wrong with ours until, on my way to Durham one afternoon, I passed a larger yaupon with probably twice the berries that we have. And this tree was out in the open whereas outs is nestled between two pine trees.

The same day that the waxwings flew over a female Hooded Merganser landed on the pond. She stayed a little while but evidently decided our pond was too lonely and took off looking for other mergansers.

The next day we had two Pine Warberlers on the ground beneath our bedroom window. It was the first time we had seen them this winter, but they have stayed around scarffing up marvel meal and suet. We were worried about them because they, too, showed up later this year, and they had been a bright spot to gray winter days.

January 3 brought a Yellow-rumped Warbler to our front deck. It sat on the swing, flew up toward the eaves, then back down to the swing for a few minutes. That is the first time we have had one so close. Also on that day, Pine Warbler number three arrived and we have been entertained by all three since. Later in the afternoon, robins and bluebirds were on the Bradford pear eating the tiny pears these ornamentals produce.

Finally, on January 7, we saw our first woodcock of the winter. Going through old journals, I discovered that last year we heard the "peent" December 23. Thus far this year we haven't heard the woodcocks and were glad to at least see one by the creek about 5:00 p.m.

We have had the vultures (black-headed and turkey) roosting on the electrical tower near our house--probably a hundred or more. They also use adjacent large trees and one day were on a tree by our pond. Our big dog doesn't like large birds, and she eventually ran the vultures off.

Other birders seem to have had the same bird lull that we did. **Dave Abraham**, West Columbia, SC, had a flock of grackles on his dogwoods, but it has been a while since he has seen a woodpecker. His theory is that with the wet spring last year, the birds are finding plenty of wild things to eat and don't need feeder food. I hope he's right.

Charles Jewson, Southern Pines, NC, watched robins, Blue Jays, flickers, and Downy Woodpeckers eat dogwood and poke berries Christmas Day. He saw two Cedar Waxwings on the poke berry bush. House Finches ignored the feeding frenzy at the "berry patch" and concentrated on sunflower seeds at a small window feeder. Jewson also has other regular visitors. Crows show up daily for leftover popcorn. "They call loud and long when scouting but are totally silent when gliding in and during feeding." The crows seem to have trouble deciding whether to stay and eat or grab a beakful and fly off to dine more privately. They do both. Sometimes, the will take off with a beakful but return shortly, still with the popcorn, and eat with the group.

With the decrease in bird activity comes a decrease in column length. To be sure, January and February will be better, and the March 10 column will be longer. If you have happenings in your yard, please write *(1006 Dogwood Hill Lane, Wake Forest, NC 27587)* or call *(919-528-2827)*.

Chip Notes

Seed Preference Test

Turning bird watchers into "citizen-scientists" is the mission of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, an Ithica, New York based bird research center. The Lab of Ornithology coordinates the Seed Preference Test with support from the National Science Foundation.

Participants spread a banquet of birdseed, then watched to see which food birds like best: black oil sunflower seeds, white millet, or red milo. In last winter's test, participants recorded nearly *half a million* bird visits to the squares of cardboard that served as bird feeders for the experiment. They gathered data on the feeding habits of more than 30 different bird species.

What did the Seed Preference Testers find? Birds that usually feed in trees--including American Goldfinches, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Houses Finches--seem to prefer sunflower seeds. Birds that normally feed at ground level--Dark-eyed Juncos, Mourning Doves, and many sparrows--prefer millet. And birds that live only in western North America--in particular, Steller's Jay, Curve-billed Thrasher and Gambel's Quail--eat more milo than eastern species do.

If you feed birds in your backyard, you're invited to take part in this winter's Test. There is a $7.00 charge for the participant's packet.

Call 1-800-843-BIRD to enroll by phone and obtain further information.

Project Tanager

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology also sponsors Project Tanager which is seeking to answer the question, "How much forest do breeding tanagers need?".

We anticipate an article in the March/April Newsletter on Project Tanager by a CBC member-participant. However, if you can't wait to get your participant's kit write *Project Tanager/BC, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, P.O. Box 11, Ithaca, NY 14851-0011*. There is no fee to participate, but donations to help defray the costs (approximately $15) of the participant's kits are most welcome.

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
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CBC Spring Field Trips

Spring Birding in the Mountains

May 12-14, 1995

Leaders: Jan Weems (NC Museum of Natural Sciences)
John & Paula Wright (CBC)

Limit: 20 Participants
Cost: $50 ($40 for Friends of Museum & CBC members)

This is a North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences sponsored trip in which Carolina Bird Club members are invited to participate. The fee includes transportation from the Museum in Raleigh. Participants are responsible for their food and lodging arrangements. The Holiday Inn in Oteen, NC, will offer special rates for the group.

Participants will leave the Museum at 5:00 p.m. on Friday. An orientation session at the Holiday Inn at 9:00 p.m. will include an introduction to the concept of life zone changes with elevation.

Field trips on Saturday and Sunday will explore the Blue Ridge Parkway with major stops at the French Broad River, Mount Pisgah area, and the Shining Rock Wilderness on Saturday and Craggy Gardens and Mount Mitchell State Park on Sunday. Spring wildflowers as well as birds will be sought. Emphasis will be placed on identifying birds by ear. Possible rarities include Peregrine Falcon and Cerulean Warbler.

A slide illustrated program, "Breeding Warblers and Vireos of the N.C. Mountains" will be presented by John Wright on Saturday evening. In addition to discussing birds and their habitat, the program will show the devastation brought about as a result of acid rain and the wooly aphid in high elevation Frazer Fir forests.

The trip will conclude back in Raleigh late Sunday afternoon.

Registration: Contact Jan Weems, NC Museum of Natural Sciences, P.O. Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555, (919) 733-7450.

Henslow's Sparrow/Eagle/Kite Adventure

May 20, 1995

Leader: John Wright

Limit: 20 Participants **Cost:** $10

Meet at 6:30 a.m. in Greenville, NC at the McDonald's Restaurant on Greenville Blvd. (US 264 Alt Bypass) across from the Ramada & Hilton Inns and adjacent to Wal-Mart. Our major goals for the day are to see numerous Henslow's Sparrows at the Voice of America sites near Greenville, to see Bald Eagles at a commercial catfish farming operation near Greenville, and to see Mississippi Kites near their presumed breeding area on the Roanoke River near Scotland Neck. In addition, we will do as much woodland birding as we can fit in, hoping to run up a good list of warblers, vireos, etc.

The large (5 sq. mi.) Voice of America sites near Greenville are home to healthy breeding populations of Henslow's Sparrow, a declining species which is currently a candidate species for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. In June of 1994, approximately 100 singing males were counted on the two large sites by the trip leader. Our group will be visiting these two sites during the morning hours. We hope to get good looks at several individuals. Photography with a long lens might be possible with luck. These two sites are botanically interesting as well, with two species of pitcher plants scattered over the areas.

Commercial catfish farming is a growing industry in eastern North Carolina. Here in Pitt County we have two such operations, and each is attractive to Bald Eagles and other fish-eating birds. At these two sites, Bald Eagles are seen every month of the year. One of these sites was visited by field trip groups during the CBC winter meeting held recently in Washington, NC.

Mississippi Kites are a specialty of the Roanoke River near Scotland Neck, NC. The last CBC trip to this area was in June 1992. On that occasion, we had spectacular luck with a swirling feeding group of about 30 kites overhead. We can't expect that experience to be repeated, but we hope to see a few, even if at long range.

We plan this to be a loop trip, ending by late afternoon back in Greenville, Therefore, carpooling is strongly encouraged. Motels on Greenville Blvd. include Comfort Inn (919) 756-2792, Ramada Inn (919) 355-8300, and Hilton Inn (919) 355-5000.

Registration: Contact John Wright (919) 756-5139 in the evenings to reserve space and for any additional information. Mail registration form with fee to CBC Headquarters.

A Tale of the Murrelet and the Dove

by Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.

The N.C. Outer Banks/Pamlico Sound/Lake Mattamuskeet CBC weekend field trip on December 10-11, 1994 was a memorable one. However, it wasn't memorable because of birds seen on the trip. Rather, it was memorable because of a bird seen elsewhere in North Carolina while this trip was taking place!

Just as I met co-leader Russ Tyndall at his home near Wake Forest late on Friday afternoon, he told me "something you won't want to hear." A Marbled Murrelet, of the Siberian race, no less, had been seen earlier in the day at Jordan Lake by Ricky Davis and Derb Carter! All we could do was pout and moan and hope that the bird would hang around until Monday.

Two dazed, and not particularly cheerful, leaders met 18 other birders on a perfectly gloomy Saturday at the Whalebone information center. Knowing that we had to produce a bird at least as rare as a Marbled Murrelet was a daunting task! We had to make all those birders not on this trip envious. Rain kept us in our vehicles, and on the porch of the Cape Hatteras Visitor Center, much of the day. We did manage to see an immature Great Cormorant overhead at Oregon Inlet, a Parasitic Jaeger flying over the surf at the Cape Hatteras lighthouse, and a wet White-winged Dove sitting on a telephone wire on Ocracoke Island. In fact, the dove was perhaps the eighth or ninth state record. Normally, that would be quite a thrilling bird, but a Marbled Murrelet it wasn't.

After we checked into our rooms at Ocracoke on Saturday night, news came that multitudes saw the murrelet at Jordan Lake during the day. Russ and I, and some of the others, could stand it no longer. We would take the 6:30 a.m. ferry from Ocracoke to Swan Quarter, as scheduled, and then those who wanted to look for the murrelet on Sunday afternoon were free to drive the four and a half hours to Jordan Lake to give it a try. The others would bird with John and Paula Wright at Lake Mattamuskeet. Unfortunately, Sunday's weather was horrendous. A very strong cold front met us midway across Pamlico Sound, and we knew that finding a murrelet in 20-25 mph winds on a mile wide lake was going to be a challenge, even if it were still there.

Our fears came true. Russ and I arrived at Jordan around 1:45 p.m., and we and a few dozen other birders looked in vain for the murrelet amid the whitecaps for the rest of the day. It had been seen in flight earlier on Sunday, but it likely had flown the coop by the afternoon. In small consolation, about eight members of our group were able to see a tame Snow Bunting along the lake shore.

Maybe I shouldn't be distraught about missing a once-in-a-lifetime Marbled Murrelet in North Carolina. After all, I had just seen over 50 of them a month earlier in Washington state, and I was helping to lead a CBC field trip. But if the American Ornithologists' Union ever decides that the Siberian race of the Marbled Murrelet is a full species, . . .

1995 North Carolina Gulf Stream Pelagic Trips

Brian Patteson, Inc.

Brian Patteson, CBC and VSO member, is again leading pelagic birding trips to the North Carolina Gulf Stream.

Trips will be offered from both Oregon Inlet, NC and Hatteras, NC. Weather dates are shown in parentheses. Oregon Inlet trips will depart from Pirates Cove Marina at 5:30 a.m. on June 17 (18), July 31 and August 28. Hatteras trips will depart from Oden's Dock at 6:30 a.m. on May 20, 21, 27, 28, 29; July 29, 30; August 5, 6, 12, 13, 26, 27; September 16, 17. Cost is $95 per person for the Oregon Inlet trips and $75 per person for the Hatteras trips.

All Oregon Inlet trips are aboard the *Country Girl*. *Country Girl* is a 55". sport fishing boat with lots of rail space for 22 birders. She is also very fast, reaching the Gulf Stream in just a couple of hours and leaving more time to chase down hard to see birds. Captain Allan Foreman has been taking birders offshore for nearly twenty years and knows where to find birds and how to get close to them.

Hatteras Inlet trips are aboard the new 72' *Miss Hatteras*. This is a large headboat with an accessible bow, two decks, a public address system and a snack bar. She can accommodate about 60 birders and, with a cruising speed of 16+ knots, is much faster than older headboats used for pelagic trips. Hatteras is very close to the Gulf Stream. Captain Spurgeon Stowe ran many trips for Patteson in 1994 and did an excellent job.

Write or call for a brochure: Brian Patteson, Inc., P.O. Box 1135, Amherst, VA 24521, (804) 933-8687

Pterodroma Ptours

CBC member Michael Tove will also be leading pelagic tours to the Gulf Stream and deep offshore waters. His tours will be offered in two and three day sets: May 27-29, July 15-16 and August 19-20. Cost is $90 per person per day or $170 for a two day set and $250 for a three day set.

All trips are on the *Country Girl* and will depart Pirates Cove Marina at Oregon Inlet at 5:30 a.m.

For further information write or call: Pterodroma Ptours, 303 Dunhagen Place, Cary, NC 27511, (919) 460-0338.

CBC Rare Bird Alert

(704) 332-BIRD

Membership Application and Order Form

Name_____ Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____ Tel. ( )_____ ( )_____
(home) (business)

Enter/Renew Membership As Indicated

____Individual ($12)
____Family ($15)
____Student ($6)
____Affiliate Club ($15)
____Library/Institution ($15)
____Life ($200)
____Patron ($50)

Send Materials Indicated

____CBC Cloth arm patch $1.50 ea., $1.25 ea. in quantity
____CBC Decals (vinyl stick-on) $2.00 ea., $1.75 ea. in quantity
____Daily Checklists 10/$1.00, 25/$1.25, 50/$2.50, 75/$3.75 100/$5.00

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club, Inc. and mail to PO Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

Registration Form

CBC Special Field Trips

Name(s)_____
(list each participant)

Address_____ City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of $_____for the following field trips: ____Henslow's Sparrow/Eagle/Kite Adventure, May 20, 1995 ($10). I have called the appropriate trip leader to ensure that space is available.

Mail with check to Carolina Bird Club, Inc., PO Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

Registration Form

CBC Spring Meeting, April 28-30, 1995

Name(s)_____
(list each name for name tags)

Address_____ City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of $_____for _____member registrations at $6 each and _____nonmember registrations at $7 each. Registration at meeting will be $10 for members and $11 for nonmembers.

Mail with check to Carolina Bird Club, Inc., PO Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

Motel Reservation Form

Carolina Bird Club
Spring Meeting, April 28-30, 1995

Name_____ Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Room rate: $45.00 plus 7% tax (1-4 occupants)

Please reserve _____room(s) for _____occupants. Arrival _____ Departure_____. My check for the first night's lodging is enclosed.

Mail with deposit to Comfort Inn, 1215 E. Hwy. 72 Bypass, Greenwood, SC 29649 or call (803) 223-2838

Welcome New Members

Eddie Andrews
Charlotte, NC

Ed Blaauw
Hendersonville, NC

Ian & Jane Clarke
Greenville, SC

David R. Crawley, Jr.
Greensboro, NC

Charles T. Dennis
Wilmington,, NC

M/M Charles Dignan
Statesville, NC

Melanie Doyle
Wilmington, NC

Randy Emmitt
Clayton, NC

Charlotte Orr Gantz
Southern Pines, NC

S. Parker Gay, Jr.
Salt Lake City, Utah

David A. Hart
Chapel Hill, NC

Don & Betty Holsapple
New Bern, NC

David Kaminski
Robersonville, NC

John Kennedy
Medford, MA

William & Jean Mangun
Greenville, NC

Dr. Trudy D. Matheny
Chapel Hill, NC

Charles Moore
Camden, SC

Charles L. Nunn
Durham, NC

Edwin & Kay Poole
Winston-Salem, NC

M. S. Ravi
Greenville, NC

John Rucker
Greensboro, NC

Peter Scott
Wilmington, NC

Jane & Joseph Srail
Statesville, NC

Diane Toebe
Anchorage, AK

Dan Vaughan & Hester Lipscomb
Carrboro, NC

Earl Waller
Kinston, NC

Alex Warlick, Jr.
Jacksonville, NC

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CAROLINA BIRD CLUB, INC.

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